

J. ROBERT FERGUSON

QUICKENING CITIES

While buried in Turgenev on an overground train—
there are the glass towers, of course,
but also the Anglosphere shade
of Roque Dalton lingering in a third-storey
bookstore and the Sun
Yat-Sen memorial garden most
afternoons. Each lost face
waits on Commercial Drive with its dog, ready
with a mickey of whiskey to freshen my Slurpee.
Whichever continental philosophers hated the city's countless
locked doors have been reincarnated as janitors
with the master keys. The singing cowboy of yesteryear
still fills my mug with joe in the Bon's
Off Broadway of memory. The deluge lifts
off from the flooding and moves
northwards. Drunk-punks like cherubim hold up
a SpongeBob beach towel for a girl who changes
to a girl-plus-one in Grandview Park. Keeping cold,
the mountains trade in baldnesses. What is it about
last year's snow? I watch an East Berliner face his acrophobia
among a score of newborns on the Grouse Mountain
cable car—this other city
coming through with the dawn sun's
slow moments commuting towards autumn,
Portage and Main.